

GLOBAL INVERTEBRATE
GENOMICS ALLIANCE
NEWSLETTER NO. 9
DEC 1 2020



Dear GIGA Members and Colleagues,

I hope everyone enjoyed and stayed safe this past Thanksgiving weekend in spite of our continuing pandemic circumstances. Fortunately, it seems that relief in the form of new vaccines may be just around the corner for our beleaguered health care workers, vulnerable population, and the rest of the world. This is good news!

Also, we hope that all of us will be able to take in the spirit of the holiday season that will soon be upon us, either in person with family or via zoom or in whatever fashion works best. We all surely deserve some respite as we welcome in what we hope to be a brighter new year.

In this context, I am now asking all GIGA members to provide some support for our new society by giving a little back. As you know, GIGA does not impose any formal, required dues for members. Therefore, I am only requesting a small voluntary donation from each member of at least \$10 (about 2 cups of coffee) at this time to help our nascent non-profit GIGA before Dec 31, 2020. To make a year end, holiday contribution, please visit the secure Paypal site or contact our Treasurer, Gonzalo Giribet for other methods:

<https://www.paypal.com/paypalme2/GIGAIII>

If GIGA can obtain modest donations from at least half of our membership, this will make a good start to replenishing some of our funds for the next round of fellowships, advance plans for a GIGA IV meeting or pay our basic maintenance bills (website, and legal charges). Also please feel free to pass this request to non-member colleagues for a generous contribution. As always, all support is much appreciated and donation revenue and expenditure records are available upon request from the GIGA Treasurer. The community appreciates any support. Fund raising from corporate and other sources are also underway.

Latest GIGA News

- Speaking of the 2020 GIGA Fellowships (<https://www.giga-cos.org/Wordpress/2020/10/01/applications-open-for-giga-fellowship-in-invertebrate-genomics-2020/>), a committee led by our Early Career Director, Heather Bracken Grissom, is now assembled and actively reviewing applications. A winning student application will be announced by year's end.
- GIGA has obtained a big boost to our genomics projects, via the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation/Wellcome Sanger Institute grant to four invertebrate aquatic symbiosis genome "hubs". Within each research hub, funding will go towards high quality chromosome level reference genome sequencing of 50 host

and 50 symbiont species. Because of my GIGA affiliation, I was honored to have been contacted to lead a “photosymbiosis hub” along with Monica Medina and other colleagues. We will do our best to represent and promote GIGA goals within this framework. More details of the program, which is now soliciting 6 more hub proposals, can be found here <https://www.sanger.ac.uk/collaboration/aquatic-symbiosis-project/>.

- More news of your recent individual publications is welcome. If you’d like to post, please send notices to Fabrizio Ghiselli.

GIGA History Snippet

I wanted to give a shout out to two early supporters who were huge proponents of GIGA, from the beginning. However, to date, they have received little recognition. When the “alliance” began in 2013, the early co-founders and organizers did not really know how well GIGA would do, or how far it could go.

So firstly, I remind current members that Matt Johnston was our first volunteer webmaster to set up our original GIGA website. He did this very quickly, and though GIGAcos.org has gone through a few iterations, we thank him for giving his time and talent to get GIGA on the virtual map so quickly. We also thank Shobhit Agrawal for taking over and now Jeff Robinson for current webmastering.

Secondly, I had asked a resident doctoral candidate at Nova Southeastern University to design a logo for our nascent group, and help us develop an online brand etc. Without hesitation, Kirk Kilfoyle answered the call, and we are now very grateful for his effort. Kirk already had a reputation at the Guy Harvey Oceanographic Center (GHOC) for his artistry through his excellent, award winning underwater photos and his design of seascapes and marine organismal logos on the official NSU graduate council student t-shirts. Therefore, it did not take him very long to draw up a very elegant design for GIGA which has lasted to this day. The GIGA logo we now easily recognize, incorporates a circular double helical DNA molecule (like an autonomously replicating plasmid, but representing cohesion and the genome codes we study), which surrounds the GIGA name written in bold, primary colors to symbolize the diversity and broad scope of the membership. The acronym and name sit atop a blue sea, underscoring the GIGA focus on aquatic invertebrates. Thank you again for your early help, Kirk and Matt!



Matt Johnston, PhD



Kirk Kilfoyle, PhD

PS Spreading GIGA news

For the content of this newsletter in the future, we also welcome new ideas for highlighting GIGA, short progress reports, links and overall research progress regarding invertebrate comparative genomics from the community. As always, we welcome any news members would like to share on our current media portals -

GIGA Homepage
<http://GIGA-cos.org>

Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1554768864811769/members/>

Twitter
https://twitter.com/GIGA_COS

Please visit and disseminate at your convenience. We also welcome new moderators. And please tell us about your latest publications and results: you can contact Fabrizio Ghiselli (fabrizio.ghiselli@unibo.it), and Jeff Robinson (jeff.robinson.evol@gmail.com) to offer any assistance on media, or post announcements on these platforms.

Sincerely,

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cc: GIGA Governing Board